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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [KBTS](#) [UNSC](#) [UNOMIG](#) [GG](#)
SUBJECT: GEORGIA: UNOMIG MONITORS IN SUKHUMI AND ZUGDIDI ON
THE FUTURE OF THE MISSION

REF: TBILISI 1073

Classified By: AMBASSADOR JOHN F. TEFFT FOR REASONS 1.4 B AND D

¶1. (C) Summary. UNOMIG military monitoring officers (MMOs) in Zugdidi and Sukhumi are frustrated with the application of the current UNOMIG mandate and strongly feel that another full technical rollover would be futile. The two main problems they face, according to the MMOs themselves, are lack of freedom of movement and the presence of Russian heavy military equipment in the zone of conflict. Abkhaz de facto "vice foreign minister" Maxim Gundjia weakly expressed support for the continued presence of UNOMIG. The monitors' views coincide with those of the Georgian government, which is not prepared to compromise a principled stand on territorial integrity for the sake of an ineffective mission.
End Summary.

UNOMIG MONITORS' MISSION HINDERED

¶2. (C) During a recent visit by poloff to western Georgia, including Abkhazia, MMOs in Zugdidi and Sukhumi expressed frustration with the conditions of their operations. Specifically, they complained that the Russians and Abkhaz severely restrict their freedom of movement by forcing UNOMIG to apply for permission for every patrol. MMOs also mentioned frustration at the increasing number of hostilities directed at them. One example of this can be seen in the Kodori Valley, where the Abkhaz have decided that UNOMIG can only patrol once per month. During these monthly patrols, Abkhaz and/or Russian "support" to UNOMIG is seen by the MMOs merely as a way to obstruct and stall their patrols. The MMOs condemned the presence of Russian heavy military equipment in the zone of conflict. The MMOs said that in the current operating environment - a technical extension since February 15 - it has been difficult to effectively carry out their mission, and, in their view, another full technical rollover would be just as futile. They stated that a strong mandate requiring their freedom of movement and forcing the Russians to remove their heavy military equipment from the zone of conflict is necessary to carry out their mission effectively. They acknowledged, however, that reaching such an agreement with the Russians is unlikely.

DO THE ABKHAZ WANT THE UN IN ABKHAZIA?

¶3. (C) The MMOs noted that while the Abkhaz de facto authorities say publicly that they want the UN presence to continue in Abkhazia, they are only weakly motivated to maintain a UN presence. In a meeting with de facto "vice foreign minister" Gundjia, poloff observed the same. Gundjia stated that the de facto authorities are unhappy with the European Union Monitoring Mission (EUMM), which they consider biased towards the Georgians. He said that it is unacceptable that the EUMM mandate covers only Georgia and not "independent" Abkhazia and also noted EUMM failure to

publish reports as a key mark against them. (Note: Although the EUMM's mandate covers the entire territory of Georgia, including Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Abkhaz, South Ossetian and Russian forces have not allowed them to enter the separatist territories. End note.) When questioned on Abkhaz desire for a new UNOMIG mandate, Gundjia rather half-heartedly stated that they do want UNOMIG to remain. However, he said that a new mandate should incorporate more capacity building and focus on reforms and economic development. (Note: While Gundjia did not specify to poloff Qdevelopment. (Note: While Gundjia did not specify to poloff any conditions on the name of a new UN mandate, de facto "foreign minister" Sergey Shamba was quoted in Interpress News on June 15 saying that the Abkhaz would not allow a new mandate if the name uses "Abkhazia, Georgia." End note).

COMMENT

14. (C) Although the monitors' comments reflected frustration with the inherent weakness of a technical rollover, they also reinforced a basic message the Georgian government has been making over the course of the UNOMIG negotiations (reftel). Even with a UN mandate, a mission on the ground is only as effective as the Russians will allow them to be. The monitors' opinions lend strong support to the government's strategy of not compromising its principles for the sake of a potentially ineffective mission.

TEFFT